Speaker’s Volition and Clausal Subject

Jaieun Kim (Sogang University)

Introduction This study discusses Korean modal suffix -keyss- that is used to express the ‘commissive force’[^1] of a clause.[^1] Data show that -keyss- restricts a clausal subject to refer to a speaker in both matrix and embedded declarative clauses and to a hearer in interrogative clauses. I argue that a set of anaphoric operators that encodes “point-of-view” is located in the left periphery[^6][^8] and it links the clausal subject with the discourse participant.

-keyss- and clausal subject As shown in (1), the subject must be interpreted as the 1st person in matrix clause and be coindexed with the matrix subject in embedded clause. Note that both the 1st person noun in (1a) and the matrix subject in (1b) are the speaker who uses -keyss- to express volition in the actual utterance.[^2]

(1) a. (Nay/Ney/Jina-ka) kot i chayk-ul ilk-keyss-ta.
   (*I/You/Jina-NOM) soon this book-ACC read-VOL-DECL
   ‘I will read this book soon.’

   Yenghi-NOM Minswu-DAT book-ACC read-VOL-DECL-CNJ tell-PST-DECL

In interrogatives, the subject is always the 2nd person in the matrix clause and coindexed with the matrix object in an embedded clause, as shown in (2). The clausal subject refers to the hearer who is being questioned about his/her volition regardless of whether the clause in question is matrix or embedded.

(2) a. *Nay/Ney/Jina-ka onul cemsim-ul sa-keyss-ni?
   *I/You/Jina-NOM today lunch-ACC buy-VOL-INT
   ‘Do you intend to buy (me) lunch today?’

   Yenghi-NOM Minswu-DAT lunch-ACC buy-VOL-INT-CNJ ask-PST-DECL

In sum, the constraint depends on the connection between the subject and the discourse participant.

[^1]: Note that the modal suffix -keyss- has two different meanings: a volitive meaning and an assertive meaning. The -keyss- with the latter meaning has nothing to do with the subject constraint. Here, I am concerned with only the former meaning of -keyss-.

[^2]: Gloss abbreviations are as follows: ACC=accusative; CNJ=conjunct; DAT=dative; DECL=declarative; INT=interrogative; LOC=locative; NOM=nominative; PST=past tense; TOP=topic; VOL=volitive.
participant who is conscious of the situation that is denoted by the verb followed by –keyss–.

**Consciousness Phrase** To account for the constraint, I first propose that a functional phrase, Consciousness Phrase (ConscP), is located below Modal Phrase (MP) and above TP, and the Consc head consists of two anaphoric operators: a Point-of-View operator ([POV]) and a Conferee operator ([CONF]). The [POV] is activated when a certain element in structure requires that the speaker is conscious of the situation, while the [CONF] is activated when the hearer is fully conscious of the situation. In case of –keyss–, the [POV] is activated in declarative clauses, whereas the [CONF] is activated in interrogative clauses since it is the speaker and the hearer, respectively, who is conscious of the event in each context. Once the operator is activated, the [POV] and [CONF] are respectively bound to a subject and an indirect object of a superordinate clause, and receive features from each referent.

**The features of –keyss–** Based on the data presented in (1–2), I assume that an M head, where –keyss– is spelled out, basically has [+volition] and an uninterpretable Consc feature ([uConsc:____]) as well as other related features. The uninterpretable Consc feature is a Probe and thus receives its value from a matching Goal in the ConscP via Agree.

**Analysis** With the above assumptions, the derivation of –keyss– clauses can be illustrated as below:

(3) a. Declaratives b. Interrogatives

![Diagram of Derivation](image)

After the Consc operator values the uninterpretable Consc feature on M via Agree, the probe is inherited by T head (Feature Inheritance). Then, T imposes the interpretive constraints on the clausal subject in Spec TP. Note that the same derivation applies to both matrix and embedded clauses. The seemingly distinct behaviors between the two contexts, which are shown in (1–2) above, are due to the difference
between their superordinate clauses. The superordinate clause of the matrix clause is not another CP but a Speaker/Addressee Phrase which has the 1st person and the 2nd person that respectively denote the speaker and the hearer as its subject and indirect object.\(^9\)

**Conclusion** This study reveals (i) that the discourse-oriented nature of Korean modal suffix –keyss– imposes the interpretive constraints on clausal subjects in various contexts and (ii) that the interface between discourse participants and clausal subject is formalized in syntactic derivation. Specifically, I have proposed that the ConscP, which encodes speaker and hearer-oriented operators, is located between MP and TP, and the operator links the discourse participant and the subject through binding relation and Agree in the spirit of the Minimalist Program.

**References**  